

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for identifying a missing person comprising the steps of:
 - (1) providing a portable electronic storage medium;
 - (2) storing unique identifying indicia of the person on said medium;
 - (3) encrypting selected portions of the stored indicia;
 - (4) giving said medium to an entity having legal custody of said person;

and,

(5) providing said medium and a decryption key to an investigative authority for disbursement of portions of said indicia should the person go missing.

2. The method as set forth in claim 1 wherein the indicia includes at least one of a photo, a streaming video, a voice recording and fingerprints of the person.

3. The method as set forth in claim 2 wherein the encrypted indicia include at least the fingerprints.

4. A method for providing personal information to an investigative authority for use in locating a missing person, comprising the steps of:

(1) storing on an electronic storage medium physical indicia of the person including a digital streaming video of the person and a digital recording of the voice of the person;

(2) retaining the storage medium separate from the person and separate from a centralized storage facility; and,

(3) utilizing the storage medium to deliver the indicia to the authority should the person go missing.

5. The method as set forth in claim 4 wherein the physical indicia include fingerprints of the person, and including the additional steps of:

(1) encrypting the fingerprint indicia; and,

(2) providing the authority with a decryption key.

6. A method for providing personal information to an investigative authority for use in locating a missing person, comprising the steps of:

(1) storing digital physical indicia of the person on an electronic storage medium in a data format for direct computer dissemination;

(2) encrypting portions of the data;

(3) giving possession of the storage medium only to an entity having legal custody of the person;

- (4) providing the authority with a decryption key in advance of dissemination; and,
- (5) utilizing the electronic storage medium to deliver the data to the authority.

7. The method as set forth in claim 6 wherein said encoding step comprises:

- (1) producing a camera image of the person, an audio reproduction of the voice of the person, and a set of fingerprints of the person; and,
- (2) encrypting the fingerprints.

8. The method as set forth in claim 7 wherein the camera image includes a streaming video.

9. The method as set forth in claim 7 wherein the audio reproduction comprises a streaming video.

10. An apparatus for use by an investigative authority to assist in locating and identifying a missing person comprising:

an electronic storage medium containing unique identifying indicia of the individual;

- 5 means for encrypting selected portions of the stored indicia; and
- means for formatting said storage medium to enable direct entry of the stored indicia into an electronic communication system of the authority.

11. The apparatus as set forth in claim 10 wherein the physical indicia includes at least one of a photo, a streaming video, a voice recording, and fingerprints of the person.

12. The apparatus as set forth in claim 11 wherein the encrypted indicia include at least the fingerprints.

13. An apparatus for providing personal information to an investigative authority for use in locating a missing person comprising:

an electronic storage medium containing physical indicia of the person including a digital streaming video of the person and a digital recording of the voice of the person; and

5 a format for said storage medium enabling direct electronic communication of the indicia to the authority should the person go missing.

14. The apparatus as set forth in claim 13 wherein the physical indicia include a full set of fingerprints of the person, and further comprising:

- means for encrypting the fingerprint indicia on the storage medium; and,
- means for providing the authority with the decryption key.

15. An apparatus for providing personal information to an investigative authority for use in locating a missing person comprising:

an electronic storage medium storing digital physical indicia of the person in a data format for direct computer dissemination;

means for encrypting portion of the data; and,

a decryption key for said encrypted portions; and,

means for delivering said key to the authority in advance of dissemination.

16. The apparatus as set forth in claim 15 wherein said physical indicia includes a camera image of the person, an audio reproduction of the voice of the person, and a set of fingerprints of the person; and,

means for encrypting the fingerprints.

17. The apparatus as set forth in claim 16 wherein the camera image includes a streaming video.

18. The apparatus as set forth in claim 17 wherein the audio reproduction comprises a streaming audio.

19. A method for locating and identifying a missing child comprising the steps of:

(1) providing to the legal guardian of the child a kit including a picture ID card of the child and a CD storing unique identifying indicia of the child including encrypted forensic indicia;

(2) utilizing the picture ID to begin a stage one search should the child go missing;

(3) utilizing the CD to initiate a stage 2 search, if necessary, to electronically disseminate certain identifying indicia to an investigative authority; and,

(4) utilizing a previously supplied decryption key to initiate a stage three search, if necessary, to electronically disseminate certain encrypted forensic indicia to an investigative authority.

20. The method as set forth in claim 19 including the step of providing a streaming video and a streaming audio of the child as a part of the stored indicia.

21. The method as set forth in claim 19 including the step of providing a set of digital fingerprints of the child as a part of the encrypted forensic indicia.